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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 5 : A21D 8/00	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 91/14370
		(43) International Publication Date: 3 October 1991 (03.10.91)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US90/04247

(22) International Filing Date: 27 July 1990 (27.07.90)

(30) Priority data:
495,603 19 March 1990 (19.03.90) US

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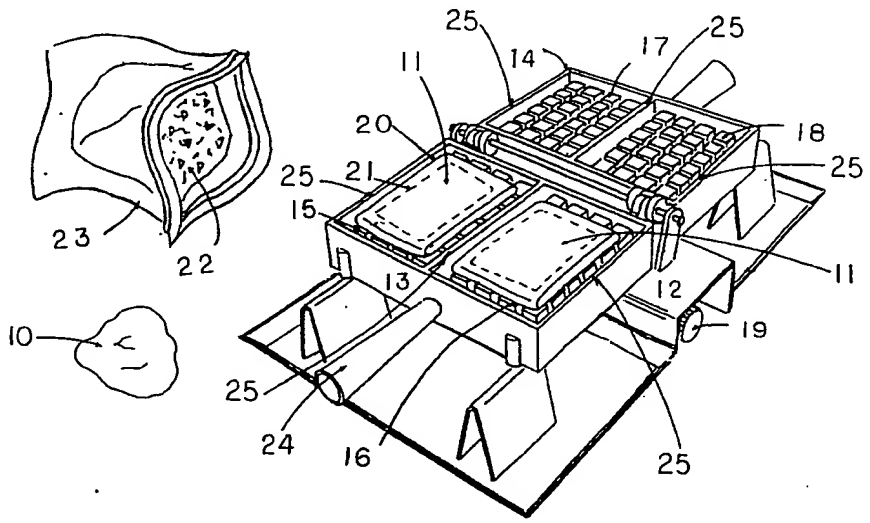
(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), CA, CH (European patent), DE (European patent)*, DK, DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FR (European patent), GB (European patent), IT (European patent), JP, LU (European patent), NL (European patent), SE (European patent), SU.

Published
With international search report.

(54) Title: FAST FOOD ITEM



(57) Abstract

A method of preparing a fast food item includes providing a flat raw shell produced from a quantity of cholesterol free special raw dough (10), whose texture is sealable, supple, wieldy, and a quantity of prepared fillings (22); applying the fillings flat atop said shell (20); encasing the fillings (21) and sealing the shell to produce a one-piece configurated, compact, flat filled raw shell (11). Placing said shell (11) in a special iron (12) to produce a preformed branded, seamless, food item (11'). Baking said preformed item or reheating same baked item in a customary oven or, if desired, in same iron to produce a portable fast food item (11'). Inserting said item in a special container (36) for immediate consumption, or storing it for deferred consumption. The special iron comprises two plates (13, 14) having flat studs (17, 18) of even height, shorter than the elevation of the two plates' outer-lips (25) by the depth of a hollow space sufficient to embed the flat filled raw shell.

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FAST FOOD ITEM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Field of the Invention This invention relates generally to food and a method of its preparation, and particularly to a novel and improved tightly sealed, seamless, compact, portable, preformed and baked filled type sandwich, a nutritious meal on the run whose fillings are heated while the shell is baking. The fillings encased within the shell are prepared well in advance and include a variety of fresh, cooked, or processed food ingredients. The flat filled raw shell, is prepared aside from the cooking appliance, preformed in a special iron, baked and reheated in a customary oven, and it may be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, transported, in its raw, preformed or baked condition. As a compact, portable, baked fast food item, it suits conveniently with the consumer time, in that, it can be held in the hand like a candy bar, consumed hot or cold, at the premises, at home, at work, or on the move with no leaks, drips, or cracks.

Description of the Prior Art Prior to this invention, food items have provided a variety of sandwiches with some type of filling placed between the two layers of shell whether slices of bread, buns, sheet of pastry, taco shell, batter mix or other forms of containers.

For example, Giovannetti, Yost and Mesiak et al., United States Patent numbers 1,596,652, 2,066,507, and 2,170,153 respectively, introduce certain type of sandwiches whereby the pre-cooking steps such as laying the shell, placing the filling ingredients atop the shell, encasing the filling within the shell, and sealing the shell around the filling are concomitantly performed over the cooking appliance or in association with it. The cooking appliance whether a mold, combined toaster and grill, or waffle iron is designed to combine the dual functions of a work board to prepare the filled raw shell

and a mold to cook said shell and its uncooked filling simultaneously.

The methods proceed from laying the raw shell over the lower plate of the cooking appliance; placing the raw filling atop said shell in a specially designated space centralized within the plate; and encasing the raw filling within the raw shell. Encasing is attained either by laying a second layer of raw shell or other type of shell atop both the raw filling and the first layer of shell, or by pouring a sufficient quantity of batter mix to cover both the filling and the first layer of batter already poured; and, then sealing the unfilled edges of said shell around said filling.

Since encasing and sealing overlap, completion of the two steps is achieved mechanically within the plates of the cooking appliance through clamping and compressing together the unfilled edges of the filled raw shell, or by frying the said shell which is immersed in a frying material, or simply by the abutment of both the loaded and the unloaded plates during the cooking operation.

There are certain problems arising from these prior art methods. For example, according to Giovannetti's method, the frying process and the removal of the already fried food article from its cooking appliance require a series of steps that must be performed by the operator. Such steps include placing the loaded concave, perforated cooking appliance on a shelf in a rack and placing the rack in a frying pot of frying material and let the frying process cook both the filled raw shell and its encased raw egg filling until the shell turns brown and crispy; then, removing the rack from the frying pot, removing the appliance from the rack, and, removing the cooked food article from the appliance, ready for consumption.

Yost's method differs in that, it uses two slices of bread as a shell and raw hamburger meat as a filling enclosed between them. Toasting the shell while cooking the raw filling is done by holding and flipping the loaded mating plates of the cooking appliance over a burner as required by the cooking operation.

Mesiak's method, on the other hand, applies over the cooking appliance two layers of raw batter mix, within which the raw chopped meat filling is encased, though confined to the central portion of said layers. This is done in three steps: pouring the first layer of a batter mix over the central and marginal sections of the lower plate of the cooking appliance, topping the central designated section of said layer with a quantity of raw filling, and then pouring the remainder of same batter mix to cover both the central and marginal sections of the first layer and its filling. The cooking process proceeds by swinging down the upper plate of the cooking appliance to a closed position over the loaded lower plate. The heating is unequally supplied so that more heating is directed more towards the filled portion of the waffleburger than to the unfilled border to ensure the simultaneous cooking of both portions at the same time. Encasing and sealing the cooking food article is finally completed by the cooking appliance during the cooking operation.

Many of the above problems are either totally eliminated, alleviated or improved upon by the new approach and the novel preparatory steps devised to produce a unique baked food item described by the methods presented in this application.

For example, the preparation of the filled raw shell, according to this invention, is done over a work table, not over the cooking appliance. Such an important transitional step makes it possible to produce a sealed, one-piece configurated flat filled raw shell, compact and portable that can be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, or transported as soon as it is put together, independently from preforming or baking. This separation of operations renders immediate cooking of the filled raw shell unnecessary and reduces the dual functions of the prior art cooking appliance to a mono function, namely cooking. As a result, preforming and/or baking of the said filled raw shell may be put off temporarily awaiting future demands.

According to prior art, once the filled raw shell is

prepared over the cooking appliance, it turns into an irretrievable uncooked food article that can not be refrigerated or transported apart from its cooking appliance. Such associated connection is so closely indissoluble that the cooking operation must be allowed to continue in order to remove said filled shell from its cooking appliance. Only upon reaching the final cooking step, the produced cooked food article can be retrieved and consumed hot, as suggested by prior art methods.

Reheating the cooked food article is not suggested by prior art methods. It is safe to assume, therefore, that the prior art cooked sandwich is produced for immediate and not deferred consumption. Such specifications proscribe the prior art sandwiches from the flexibility, convenience and benefits inherent to the food item presented in this application. Even if the prior art filled raw shell thus produced is meant to be stored, then with such an indissoluble association, refrigerating, transporting, etc. must be done in conjunction with the same cooking appliance in which it is prepared. To transport or refrigerate the filled raw shell together with its cooking appliance is not an efficient way of using storage space and material resources if many orders must be prepared in advance and necessarily be stored or transported.

Such impracticalities and limitations are overcome by devising and simplifying a method of food preparation based on the separation of the preparatory operations applied by this invention. According to this method, the produced food item goes through three complimenting yet independent operations. These operations are independent from each other in the sense that each operation is so complete that it allows each specific food item to benefit from the mentioned above advantages at each level of preparation. Yet, they are also complimenting to one another because they're performed according to a sequential order. In sequence, these operations proceed from the preparation of a one-piece configurated, flat filled raw shell operation, to the preformed, seamless, branded food item operation, then, to the baked or reheated, compact, portable fast food

item operation; all being prepared independently from one another, yet each is an indispensable contributor to producing the finished product.

The method in which these operations are used is distinctively unique to this invention. For example, the flat filled raw shell method covers the preparation and completes the operation relevant to producing the flat filled shell still in its raw condition as an independent entity, and, makes it ready for immediate or deferred preforming. In the event that immediate consumption is desired, then the said filled shell is entered into the preforming and baking operations without delay, while if the deferred consumption is desired, then the same filled raw shell should be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, or transported, only to be preformed and/or baked at same or another location at a later convenient time.

The flat filled raw shell operation includes the steps of laying the flattened raw shell topped by the filling ingredients, and those steps of encasing and sealing in dissociation with the cooking appliance. In fact, such an operation saves on time unnecessarily consumed as it ultimately frees prior art produced filled raw shell from its dependency upon the cooking appliance dual functions in which it is prepared and cooked. Such a dependency not only makes the prior art filled raw shell irretrievable from its cooking appliance prior to its cooking, it also confines its potential growth and future expansion. In comparison, the flat filled raw shell produced as described in this application is an added novelty to the old and existing art and it opens up a host of opportunities for unlimited expansion. These improvements are a natural outcome resulting from the special raw dough developed by this invention.

Being the link between the flat filled raw shell operation and the baking operation, the preforming operation constitutes a complete departure from what is known in the field of making hot sandwiches. It also paves the way to whole new possibilities economically feasible and efficient to carry out large scale production of fast

food items made by the devised methods of this invention. Furthermore, the preformed food item thus described may be conveniently baked, and the baked item reheated in customary ovens wherever and whenever such appliances are available.

The preforming operation is an independent one-step operation which is completed in less than a minute. It proceeds from placing the flat filled raw shell, previously prepared and stored, in the preforming unit of the special iron for about thirty seconds. The resulting preformed food item is a branded, seamless, compact, portable, flat filled shell that has all the features and attributes of the flat filled raw shell prepared earlier. As branded by the imprint of the interior plate pattern of the preforming unit of the special iron in which it is preformed, the preformed food item becomes quite distinguishable from the flat filled raw shell in appearance shape and firmness. Such imprints may be constructed in a variety of forms ranging from square flat studs to flat logos and symbols, to flat geometric shapes and forms, to flat words or letters, depending upon the chosen pattern designed for the plate's interior preforming units of the special iron.

The baking operation may be attained by retrieving the already stored preformed food item, inserting it in a customary oven, or, alternatively, placing it in a similar preforming unit of said iron for sufficient time to let it bake while tenderly heating the filling ingredients. Preforming and baking operations do not necessitate the attendance of the operator. This method does not call for cooking the filled raw shell and its uncooked filling simultaneously. It simply bakes the shell, and, in the process, the filling ingredients are heated and activated. Fresh filling ingredients are intended to remain freshly uncooked within the shell. The meat, fish or egg filling encased within the flat raw shell has been cooked well in advance; in this respect simultaneous cooking of raw meat and shell is not required, nor needed. The controlled heating system penetrating the baking shell is designed to activate and heat evenly the encased filling ingredients

and retain their freshness, and nutritious values.

The oven used in the baking operation is of the customary type, unlike the concave, perforated cooking appliance with dual functions which must work in association with a frying pot; nor is it anything like that dual functions mold whose two mating plates are so designed to generate a steam pressure cooking effect which cooks thoroughly and simultaneously the raw meat filling while toasting the bread; nor can it be identified with that of the dual functions waffle iron designed to cook simultaneously a waffleburger whose unfilled bordering portion and the filled portion produce two differential gustatory effects.

There are other significant differences between the dual functions cooking appliances devised by prior art and the one used by this invention. The customary oven introduced by this invention to bake the preformed fast food item is a novel idea compared to prior art cooking methods. The special iron employed by this method, as described in this application, has two plates each having a pair of preforming units. The designed interior pattern of said units may be identical, or each unit may have its own pattern as chosen. The number of preforming units in any of said irons could be increased or decreased as desired. Each of the two plates has a number of square (or other shapes), flat, even height studs, shorter than the elevation of the plates' outerlips by the depth of a hollow space sufficient to embed the desired flat filled raw shell. Once the flat filled raw shell is placed in either plate preforming unit and the plates are put in a closed position, preforming is done on its own as described previously.

The plates of this special iron pivot to lay side by side and to freely open from right to left and vice versa. Since either of the two plates may be loaded, the unloaded plate is imposed upon the loaded plate when the iron is preforming, or in a closed position. Both plates have the same number of corresponding preforming units, distribute even heating supply, and can be used to preform, bake, or

reheat simultaneously two food items having different filling ingredients, served to one or two customers at the same time. Multi-preforming units may be constructed to serve more than two customers at one time. Upon closing the special iron, the plates' outerlips are brought together in a contiguous abutment to contain the heat within each preforming unit, and to ensure proper performance. The heating supply is controlled by a thermostatic system that allows setting the heating to the desired temperature when iron is active and to a lower temperature when idle. Heating the special iron may be achieved by an electrically powered heating element within each plate or may be powered by gas, depending on the special iron chosen.

The predetermined consistency of the special raw dough provided by this invention adds another feature to this method. Unlike Giovannetti's raw dough, Yost's slices of bread, or Mesiak's batter mix, the said raw dough doesn't contain animal fat, nor does it incorporate egg ingredients among its components. The flat raw shell produced from a quantity of said dough, has a texture which is readily sealable, supple, elastic and wieldy enough to encase a variety of filling ingredients without encumbering the shell's structural composition, uniformity, appearance, compactedness and portability. The filling ingredients may consist of cooked meat, fish, and eggs; a blended mixture of filling ingredients such as fresh vegetables and fruits; cheese, pizza sauce, chocolate or nuts. They may conveniently be applied shredded, sliced, ground, diced or in bulk.

Indeed, the properties of the special raw dough and the way it is used, makes possible the separation of operations at the three performance levels cited before, most particular, the filled raw shell. Such a step may be considered a major breakthrough in the operations of producing hot sandwiches distinctly different from what is old and what is existing.

In fact, a raw dough shell with such distinctive features peculiar to this invention has indeed redesigned

the steps suggested by prior art and eliminated the irrelevant ones, has reduced the dual functions of the cooking appliances to a mono-function solely used for preforming purposes, has utilized the customary ovens to bake the preformed food item thus bringing in the preformed food item to every home or place that has an oven without necessarily having the need to own the special preforming iron, has freed the prior art filled raw shell from its entrapment in its cooking appliance, has provided the flat filled raw shell produced by this invention with unlimited opportunities for potential growth and future expansion, has brought in the advantages of having a deferred consumption in addition to immediate consumption; has freed the operator from performing tedious impracticalities over the dual functions cooking appliance, has decreased the consumer's waiting time considerably, and it is now offering the consumer a variety of healthy, cholesterol free, nutritious, seamless, compact, and portable, fast meals on the run that can be held in the hand and consumed like a candy bar.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention overcomes many of the problems and eliminates many of the preparatory and operational steps relative to the art of producing a hot sandwich, by introducing a novel idea by applying new methods of preparing a flat filled raw shell which may be immediately preformed, baked, and consumed, or alternatively stored for deferred preforming, baking and consumption. Such a novelty in idea and method is made feasible by the development of the special raw dough, by simplifying the preparatory steps, by the separation of the operational performances, by originating the preforming step that allows unlimited growth and larger scale production at a reduced cost, and by utilizing customary ovens for baking the preformed and/or reheating the baked food item, thus, promoting the marketability of the preformed food item. These contributions make producing the invented food item convenient, efficient and economical.

Generally, a method of preparing a food item according to this invention includes providing a quantity of special raw dough of predetermined consistency and a quantity of filling ingredients well prepared in advance. The variety of fillings includes, but not limited to, cooked meat, fish and eggs in various forms; a blended mixture of filling ingredients such as fresh vegetables and fruits; cheese, pizza sauce, nuts and chocolate, which make the finished food item a breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snack article.

The special raw dough of the distinctive properties described in this application produces a flat raw shell that may be used immediately in encasing the filling and completing the remaining operations to produce a finished hot sandwich, or alternatively may be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, or transported for deferred use. This flat raw shell has a structural composition which in dissociation with the cooking appliance, adapts to the operations of encasing a variation of filling ingredients, sealing tightly around said fillings, preforming the flat filled raw shell in a special iron, baking the preformed flat filled shell, or reheating the baked food item in a customary oven, conserving the filling's nutritious values and freshness, and maintaining their tastiness, flavor and moistness.

The method of preparing the flat filled raw shell proceeds from flattening a desired quantity of the special raw dough, to form a flat raw shell, applying evenly atop the desired quantity of filling ingredients, encasing said filling and sealing tightly the filled shell, thus producing a one-piece configurated, flat, filled raw shell. The said filled shell may be immediately refrigerated, frozen or transported for deferred use or alternatively, enter the preforming operation directly followed by the baking operation in the event immediate consumption is desired. In the event immediate preforming and/or baking is desired, h wever, for deferred consumption, then the resulting food item should be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, or transported as required.

Preforming is attained by employing a special iron of

the type described in this application. The preforming operation proceeds from preheating the special iron to the required temperature, setting the plates of said iron in an opened position, placing the prepared flat filled raw shell in either plate preforming unit, closing the unloaded plate over the loaded plate to let the said filled raw shell preform for a sufficient period of time unattended by the operator.

Branding is done during the preforming operation by the imprint of the interior plate pattern chosen for the special iron. Branding, unnecessarily identical, should appear on both flat sides of the finished product. The resulting food item defines a sealed cavity of narrow cross sectional area in which the filling is disposed.

Baking the preformed food item is done in any customary oven. The baking operation proceeds from preheating the said oven to the required temperature, inserting the preformed food item in said oven, closing the oven, and let the inserted preformed food item bake on its own for a sufficient period of time unattended by the operator. Reheating the baked food item is done in a similar way. Baking or reheating can also be attained in the same preforming special iron, similarly to the preforming operation.

In consequence, the operation of preparing the flat filled raw shell is done independently from the operations of preforming or baking and in dissociation from the cooking appliance; by the same token, the operation of preforming is also completed in dissociation from both the baking and the flat filled raw shell operations. In addition, preforming and baking can be done in two separate and different ovens. According to the separation of operations concept disclosed in this application, each of the three operations may be achieved independently from the oth r two at any preferred time or location; or, the three op rations may be done in a successive row at one time and at one designated location for immediate or deferred consumption.

In line with the above, the finished food item is

produced by the completion of the three described independent operations, namely, the one-piece configurated, sealed, flat filled raw shell operation; the preformed, branded, seamless, compact flat food item operation; and the baked, portable flat fast food item operation. The above three methods of operation uniquely pertain to this invention.

The special iron employed by this invention comprises two plates providing four preforming units as described earlier. It can be constructed with more preforming units, and its plates' interior pattern may be designed to have flat logos, symbols, geometric forms or shapes, flat words or letters instead of the existing flat square studs.

An object of this invention is to provide a method that produces a food item having the novelty distinguished in this application.

Another object of this invention is to provide special raw dough whose texture has all the attributes of the shell described by this invention.

A further object is to employ a special iron which accommodates the preforming of the flat filled raw shell which can be baked or reheated in a customary oven as described in this application.

The above described features of novelty and improvement as related to this invention and the manner of attaining them will become distinctly clear, and the invention itself will be best understood, by reference to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying illustrative drawings.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIGURE 1 of the drawings is a perspective view of a special iron, a bag of filling, raw dough in ball form, and two sealed, one-piece configurated, portable flat filled raw shells stuffed with a quantity of blended mixture of filling ingredients in a position to be preformed on the special iron;

FIGURE 2 shows the preforming step with the special iron closed;

FIGURE 3 shows the two preformed flat food items

branded by the imprint of the chosen plates interior pattern designed for this special iron as described by this application;

FIGURE 4 is an enlarged perspective view of one seamless, compact, portable, baked flat fast food item inserted in its special container as held in one hand having bites horizontally taken; and

FIGURE 5 is an enlarged cross sectional view of one finished fast food item showing the filling disposed within the shell.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to Fig. 1, there is shown raw dough 10 in ball form and, a pair of sealed, compact, one-piece configurated, portable, filled flat raw shells 11, ready to be preformed in a special iron 12. By way of background information, the special iron 12 includes two plates 13 and 14 whose chosen interior pattern provides a set of square, flat studs of even height. The plates 13 and 14 can be pivoted relative to each other between the open or loading position illustrated in Fig. 1 and the closed, preforming position illustrated in Fig. 2.

The illustrated two plates 13 and 14 comprise four preforming units 15, 16, 17, and 18. Either plate may be loaded to preform the two filled raw shells 11. The studs in each preforming unit (shown in 17 and 18) are shorter than the elevation of the plate's outerlips 25 by the depth of a hollow space designed to embed the desired quantity of fillings encased within the flat filled raw shell 11.

The operation of the special iron 12 proceeds in a known manner. Suitable control components, such as a selector knob 19, activates evenly an electrically powered heating element within each plate of the special iron 12 (not shown) to cause said iron 12 to heat to a thermostatically controlled temperature depending on the position of the knob 19.

The two flat filled raw shells 11, ready for preforming are inserted in plate 13; plate 14 is moved to the closed position illustrated in Fig. 2. Once preforming

is completed and the two branded, seamless, compact, portable food items 11' are preformed, Fig. 3, the imposed plate 14 is pivoted back to open position, then, the said preformed items are removed from their plates' preforming units by a special instrument that inhibits the direct contact of the operator's bare-hands with the food items. Branding is done by the imprint chosen for the interior plate pattern 17,18 illustrated in Fig. 3. In this regard, the reference number 11' is utilized in Figure 3 to designate the two food items 11' resulting from the preforming operation.

Baking the preformed food item 11', or reheating the same baked item should be done in a customary oven (not shown); however, if desired to be done in the special iron, the operations proceed in a way similar to that of preforming. Once the baked or reheated food item 11' is accomplished and ready for consumption, then, it is removed as described above and inserted in a special container 36, held by one hand and bites are taken horizontally from the top as illustrated in Fig. 4.

The flat raw shell 20 includes a quantity of raw dough 10 taken from a supply of raw dough (not shown). It also includes a quantity of encased filling 21 taken from a supply of filling 22 well prepared in advance, which may be packaged in a sealable refrigerator bag 23 (Fig. 1) or other kind of container.

The quantity of raw dough 10 is prepared in advance and made available for immediate or deferred use. The operation proceeds from flattening the said dough to apply atop and encase within the quantity of desired filling 21, and sealing the shell around same filling, thus producing two similar compact, one-piece configurated, portable flat filled raw shells 11.

Preparing the flat filled raw shell is accomplished in a known manner on a work table in dissociation from the preforming special iron or the baking customary oven. If preforming is immediately desired, then the flat filled raw shell 11 is placed in one of the plate preforming units, as illustrated in Fig. 1, bringing the unloaded plate to a

contiguous abutment with the loaded plate as illustrated in Fig. 2, and let the flat filled raw shell preform for a sufficient period of time unattended by the operator.

The quantity of filling 21 may consist of cooked meat, fish, and eggs; a blended mixture of filling ingredients, such as fresh vegetables and fruits; cheese, pizza sauce, chocolate or nuts. The filling ingredients, shredded, sliced, diced, ground or bulk are applied flat and evenly atop the flattened raw shell (not shown) that encases them.

The quantity of the special raw dough 10 is composed of suitable ingredients to have desired attributes of taste and consistency. There are no eggs or animal fat components added. The flat shell produced from said raw dough is stiffer than a typical batter mix, yet, it has a supple, elastic, readily sealable, and wieldy texture that makes it distinctly different in this respect from a conventional raw shell, slices of bread, or other existing shell containers.

In line with the above, a method of preparing a food item according to this invention includes the steps of providing a flattened raw shell taken from a quantity of special raw dough and a quantity of desired filling ingredients encased within and sealed by the shell to form a compact, one-piece configurated, portable flat filled raw shell.

The operation of preforming the above flat filled raw shell includes preheating the special iron 12, placing said shell 11 in one of the plate's preforming units 15 and 16 of the special iron 12 (Fig. 1), closing the unloaded plate 14 over the loaded plate 13 (Fig. 2) for a period of time sufficient to preform the said flat filled raw shell. When the preforming operation is completed the preformed branded food item is produced in a seamless, compact, portable form 11' as illustrated in Fig. 3. Then removed from the special iron to be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, or transported for future baking, or, immediately baked in a customary oven (not shown) for immediate or deferred consumption.

Should baking be done in a customary oven, removal

of the baked food item is achieved as described above or by utilizing any other convenient means depending upon whether baking is done at a retail outlet or at home. Reheating the stored baked food item 11' is similarly achieved in a customary oven or in the preforming units of the same special iron in which the baked food item was preformed. However, if baking is desired to be done in the special iron then the iron 12 is opened as illustrated in Figure 3. Removal of the baked food item 11' is done similarly to that of the preformed food item described previously. Then the baked item 11' is stored for deferred consumption, otherwise, it should be placed immediately in a special container 36 held in one hand as illustrated in Figure 4, ready for immediate consumption.

The preformed, baked food item 11' may vary in weight, thickness, length, width, imprint pattern design, and the variety of combined fillings without departing from the inventive concepts disclosed in this application.

The baked food item 11', as illustrated in Fig. 4, includes a baked shell 30 and heated quantity of desired fillings 31 encased within the shell 30. The shell 30, produced from the quantity of raw dough 10 discussed earlier, is preformed and baked in a branded, seamless, compact, portable, one-piece configurated form. The quantity of cooked, fresh, or processed filling 31 is the previously described variety of desired filling ingredients.

The array of indentations 32 in each of a pair of the shell's opposite side 33 and 34 of the food item 11' (Fig. 4 and 5) has been branded by the imprint of the chosen plate's interior pattern referred to above. The branding imprints mentioned previously emblematizes the preformed food item 11' and may vary according to the interior plates pattern chosen for the preforming units in the special iron. The indentations segment the preformed or baked shell 30 and define a sealed cavity 35 of narrow cross sectional area in which the encased quantity of filling 31 is disposed, so that the filling can be held together within the shell when bite size portions are taken in a

horizontal direction as illustrated in Fig. 4. When a bite size portion is bitten off, the opposite sides of the shell 33 and 34 come to a unity with each other under the pressure applied by the bite, then gradually open up, as a result cooling of the remaining filling 35 within the shell is temporarily delayed.

The above construction is best described as a product of the method by which it is made; the resulting seamlessly baked, compact, portable, one-piece configurated, fast food item 11' has a shell which is uniformly and properly baked and a variety of desired filling ingredients which are evenly and tenderly heated during the baking process of the shell.

Although an exemplary embodiment of the invention has been shown and described, many changes, modifications, and substitutions may be made by one having ordinary skill in the art without necessarily departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What I claim is:

CLAIMS

1. A method of preparing a food item, comprising:

providing a flat raw shell from a quantity of special raw dough of a predetermined consistency, and a prepared quantity of desired filling;

encasing said filling within said shell;

preforming the filled flat raw shell in a preforming unit of a special iron; and

baking the flat filled preformed shell in a customary oven or if desired, in same preforming unit of the special iron.

2. A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of encasing includes:

producing a flat raw shell from a desired quantity of special raw dough;

applying evenly the filling atop said shell to form a flat body of filling;

encasing said filling within said shell to form a one-piece configurated flat filled raw shell;

sealing tightly said filled shell around the flat filling to form a sealed, compact, portable, flat filled raw shell; and

refrigerating, freezing, or transporting said filled raw shell for deferred preforming.

3. A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of preforming includes;

employing a special iron whose plates' interior pattern has flat, even height studs, shorter than the plates' outerlips by the depth of a hollow space designed to embed and brand the said flat filled raw shell;

preheating the preforming units of the special iron;

placing the one-piece configurated, compact, portable, flat filled raw shell in any of the plate preforming units of said iron;

closing the unloaded plate of the preforming units of said iron over the loaded plate of same iron to bring the two plates together in a contiguous abutment;

preforming the said flat filled raw shell for a

sufficient period of time to form a preformed, seamless, compact, portable, food item branded by the imprint of the interior plate pattern chosen for the special iron preforming unit;

removing the preformed food item from its preforming unit by using a special instrument;

refrigerating, freezing, or transporting same preformed item for deferred baking in a customary oven or if desired, in a similar preforming unit of said iron.

4. A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of baking includes;

preheating for a sufficient period of time the customary oven;

placing the preformed, branded, seamless, compact, portable, flat food item in said oven;

closing the customary oven and let said preformed food item bake for a sufficient period of time;

removing the baked, seamless, portable, flat fast food item from the customary oven and inserting same item in a special container for immediate consumption; or alternatively,

refrigerating, freezing, or transporting same baked item for deferred consumption; and

reheating said baked item in any oven; and

Alternatively, baking the said preformed food item may be done, if desired, in the preforming unit of the special iron in a manner similar to the preforming operation. Reheating is similarly done.

5. A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of providing includes:

providing a flat raw shell produced from a quantity of a special raw dough of predetermined consistency. The texture of the flat raw shell is supple, elastic and wieldy enough to encase a variety of desired filling ingredients, and to seal around them; the structural composition of said shell accommodates the preforming baking and reheating operations while activating and heating the fillings tenderly.

6. A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of

providing includes;

providing a quantity of prepared fillings consisting of one kind or bl nded mixture of desired fillings, whereby the meat, fish, and eggs should be precooked; other filling ingredients are applied fresh or processed and may include vegetables, cheese, pizza sauce, fruits, nuts and chocolate applied in shredded, sliced, diced, ground or bulk form.

7. A food item prepared by a method as recited in Claim 1.

8. A method of preparing a food item, comprising:

providing a flat raw shell produced from a quantity of special raw dough and a quantity of filling ingredients which includes precooked meat, fish and eggs; and fresh or processed vegetables, fruits, cheese, pizza sauce, nuts and chocolate applied in shredded, sliced, diced, ground or bulk form;

encasing the desired quantity of said fillings within the flat raw shell to form a one-piece configurated flat filled raw shell; then,

sealing tightly said filled shell to form a compact, portable, flat filled raw shell;

packaging, refrigerating, freezing or transporting the flat filled raw shell for deferred preforming; or alternatively,

placing the said flat filled raw shell in one preforming unit of the preheated special iron, closing the unloaded plate of said iron over the loaded plate for a sufficient period of time to form a preformed, branded, seamless, compact, portable, flat food item, removing the preformed item from the preforming unit of special iron by using a special instrument; then,

packaging, refrigerating, freezing, or transporting said preformed food item for deferred baking; or alternatively,

baking said preformed food item in any customary oven or same preforming unit of said iron for immediate or deferred consumption; and,

reheating for immediate consumption, the stored,

baked food item in a customary oven or in same preforming special iron for immediate consumption;

wherein the step of providing includes producing a flat raw shell from a quantity of special raw dough of predetermined consistency, free from animal fat and egg ingredients. The texture of the flat raw shell is supple, elastic and wieldy enough to encase a desired quantity of one kind or a mixture of filling ingredients and to seal around them; the thus produced one-piece configurated, compact, portable flat filled raw shell, may be preformed in a special iron, baked in a customary oven, or if desired, be packaged, refrigerated, frozen, or transported in its raw, preformed or baked conditions. Once baked, and packaged, refrigerated, or frozen, the food item may be reheated in a customary oven or same preforming unit of the special iron.

9. A food item prepared by a method as recited in Claim 8.

10. A food item, comprising;

a) a flat raw shell, a quantity of cooked, fresh or processed filling ingredients encased within and sealed by the shell to form a flat filled raw shell;

b) which one-piece configurated, compact, portable, flat filled raw shell is preformed uniformly to produce a branded, seamless, compact, portable, flat food item from a quantity of special raw dough and a variety of desired filling ingredients applied in shredded, sliced, diced, ground or bulk form;

c) the shell's exterior sides of the preformed, baked, and reheated food item are branded by the imprint of the interior plate pattern chosen for the preforming unit of the special iron in which said filled raw shell is preformed;

d) the shell of the preformed food item is uniformly baked in a customary oven or same preforming units of the special iron, while the filling ingredients are tenderly activated and heated at the same time;

e) the baked fast food item is reheated in same oven or same preforming unit of said iron;

f) the shell defining a sealed cavity of narrow cross sectional area in which the quantity of filling is disposed.

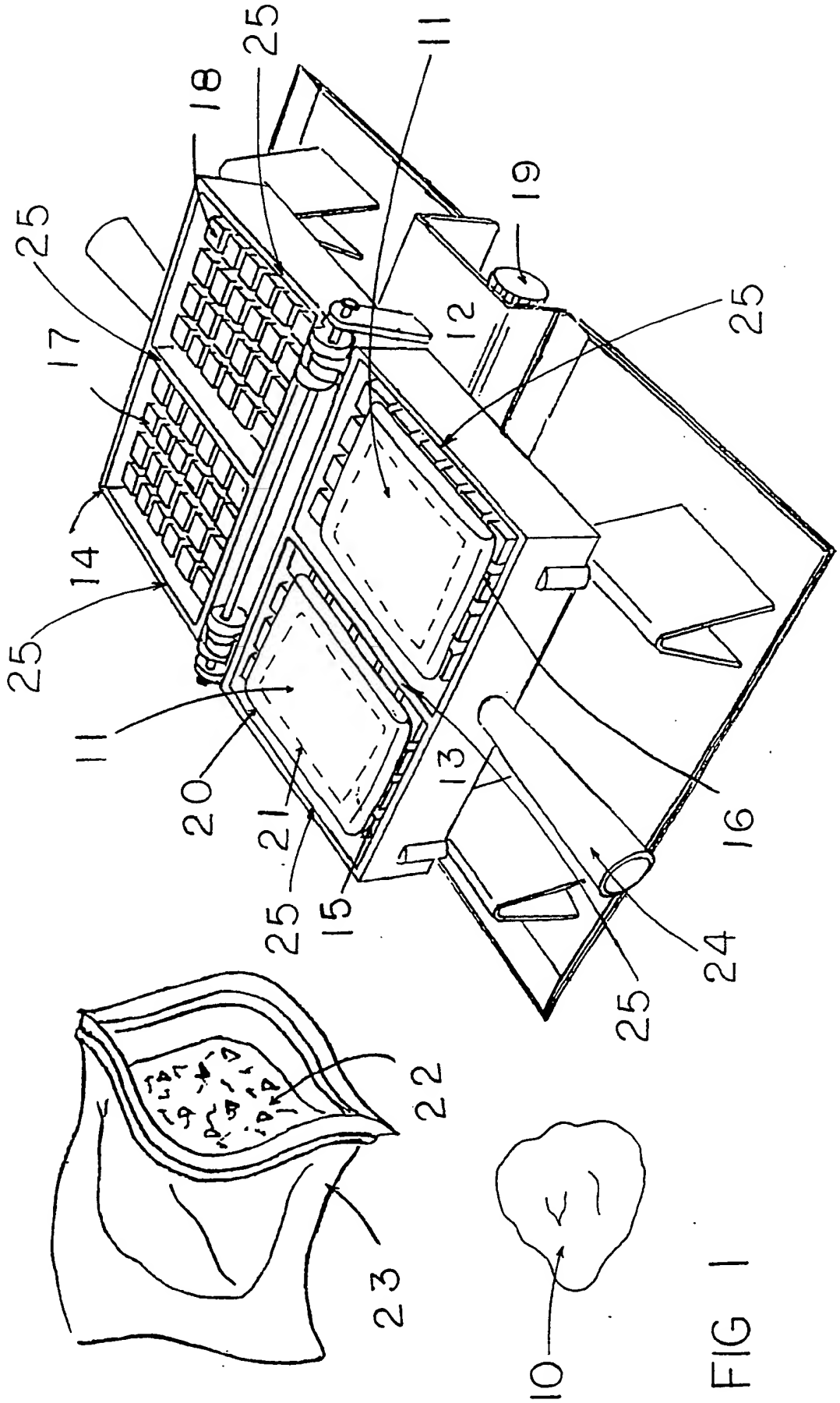
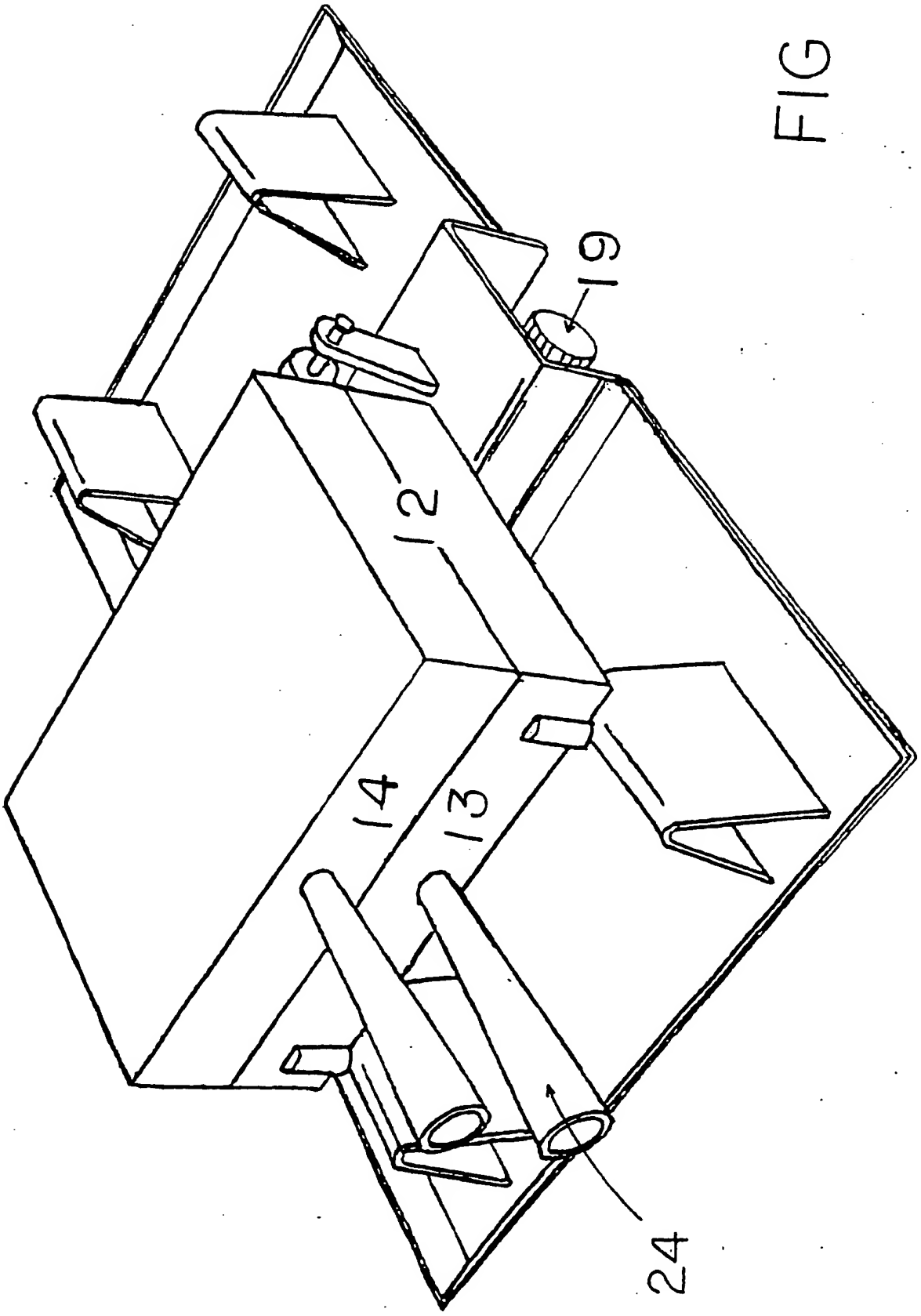


FIG 1

FIG 2



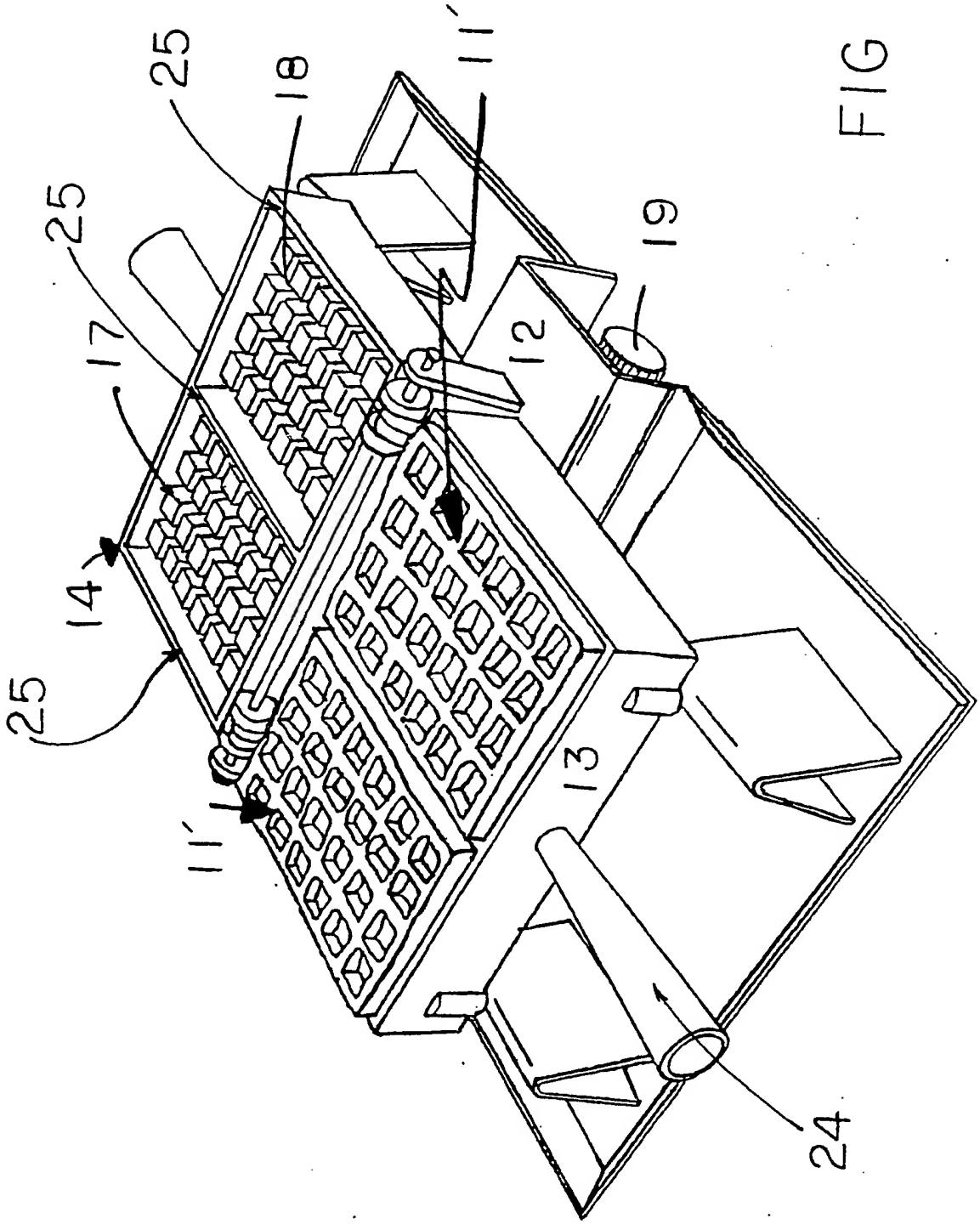


FIG 3

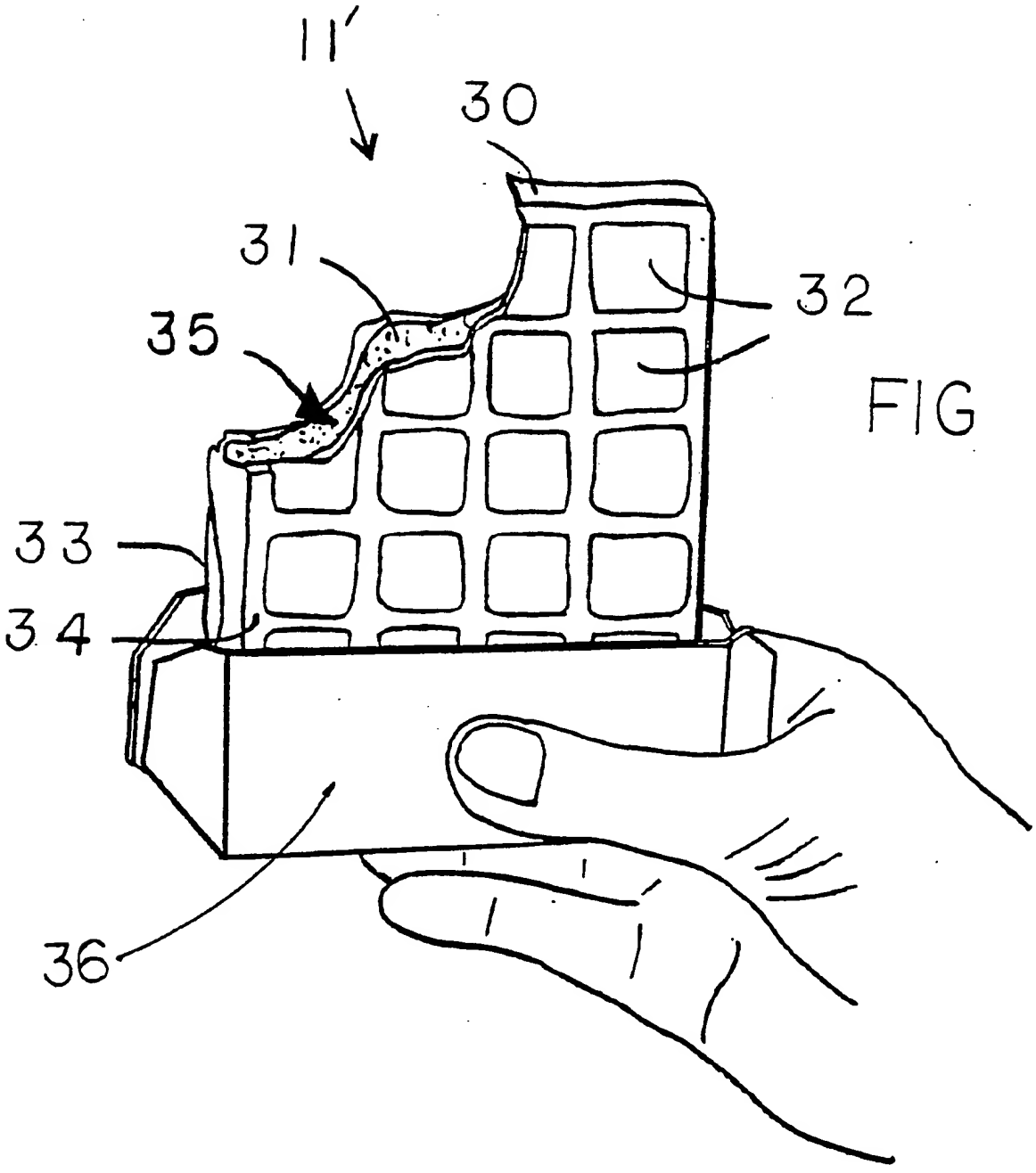


FIG 4

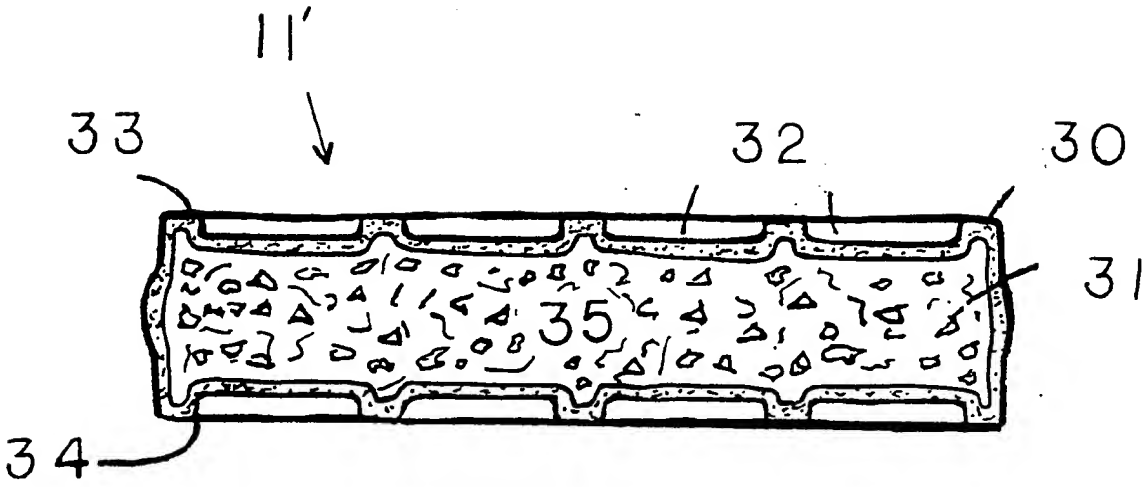


FIG 5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/US90/04247

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) [3]

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC

IPC (5): A21D 8/00

U.S. CL: 426/92; 94; 505

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched [4]

Classification System	Classification Symbols
U.S.	426/92; 94; 505

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched [5]

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT [14]

Category *	Citation of Document, [16] with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages [17]	Relevant to Claim No. [18]
Y	US,A 1,596,652 (Giovannetti) 17 August 1926, see entire docuemnt	1-6, 8
X	US,A 2,170,153 (Misiak et al) 22 August 1939, see entire document	7,9,10
Y		1-6,8
Y	US,A 2,066,507 (Yost) 05 January 1937, see entire document.	1-6,8

* Special categories of cited documents: [15]

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search [2]	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report [8]
15 March 1991	03 MAY 1991

International Searching Authority [1]	Signature of Authorized Officer [20]
ISA/US	Mary S. Mims